

REMARKS

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

To place the subject application in better form, the specification and abstract have been amended to correct minor informalities. No new matter has been added by these changes.

Claims 2, 3, 5-7, 11-15, 17-20, and 22-42 are presented for consideration.

Claims 2, 5, 6, 11, 15, and 18-20 are independent. Claims 1, 4, 8-10, 16, and 21 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 2, 5, 6, 11, 12, 15, and 18-20 have been amended to clarify features of the subject invention, while new claims 23-42 have been added to recite additional features of the subject invention. (The Examiner will note that claims 23-27, claims 28-32, claims 33-37, and claims 38-41 have been patterned after claims 8-10, 16, and 21, respectively.) Support for these changes and these claims can be found in the original application, as filed. Therefore, no new matter has been added.

Applicant notes with appreciation that claims 15, 17-20, and 22 have been allowed over the cited art of record, and that claims 2, 3, 5-7, and 11-14 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. In an effort to expedite allowance of this application, claims 2, 5, 6, and 11 have been rewritten in independent form to include the recitations of their respective base claim, namely claim 1. (Claim 5 of course also includes the features of intervening claim 4.) Accordingly, Applicant submits that independent claims 2, 5, 6, and 11 are also now

allowable. In addition, claims 3 and 23-27, variously depending from claim 2, claims 28-32, variously depending from claim 5, claims 7 and 33-37, variously depending from claim 6, and claims 12-14 and 38-42, variously depending from claim 11, likewise should be deemed allowable. Such favorable indication is requested.

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action.


Claims 1, 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Japanese patent document number 11-109606 to Masaaki. Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the Masaaki document in view of Japanese patent document number 5-114540 to Hitoshi. Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the Masaaki document in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,619,903 to Friedman et al. Claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. patent application publication number 2001/0026355 to Aoki et al. in view of the Masaaki document. Claim 21 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over the Aoki et al. publication in view of the Masaaki document as applied to claim 16, and further in view of Wolf et al. "Silicon Processing for the VLSI Era," Vol. 1. These rejections are respectfully traversed. Nevertheless, as discussed above, claims 1, 4, 8-10, 16, and 21 have been cancelled herein to expedite allowance of this application. Accordingly, Applicant submits that the foregoing rejections have become moot and should be withdrawn.

All pending claims being allowable, Applicant submits that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicant requests that the Examiner contact his undersigned representative should any matters be deemed outstanding precluding allowance of the subject application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C., office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven E. Warner", is written over a horizontal line.

Attorney for Applicant

Steven E. Warner

Registration No. 33,326

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3801
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200
SEW/agm

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